

Bob began his formal career at American University in Cairo, Egypt, after graduating from Central Michigan University. Three years later, he returned home and settled his career in the fast-growing Utica Community School (UCS) district. Much of his career at Utica was spent as the venerated, respected, and highly successful debate and communications coach at Henry Ford II High School. He coached numerous teams and individuals to debate and forensics state championships and was inducted into the Michigan Speech Coaches Hall of Fame in 1983. His debate colleagues knew him as a fierce competitor and a voracious researcher with a nearly photographic memory. But above all, he was ethical, principled and always put first the education and care of the young people in his charge.

In 1984, Bob and his wife, Dr. Donna McMinn, embarked on a new chapter in their lives by moving to Japan where Bob became an English and communications instructor.

Inspired by the experience and potential to enrich the lives of young people back home, they returned to Michigan and Bob established the pioneering East Asian Institute at UCS. For nearly 10 years, countless students from Michigan and Japan spent time in one another's homes and schools as exchange students, building cultural bridges and relationships that endure today.

In 1994, the broader educational community took note of Bob's exceptional dedication and innovative work. He was honored as a Michigan Teacher of the Year by the state, Macomb County Teacher of the Year by WDIV-Newsweek and Teacher of the Year by the Michigan Council for Social Studies.

For the next 15 years, Bob served as a UCS administrator in a variety of roles and shaped curricula for all Utica Schools' students. Among the most innovative programs he spearheaded was the Utica Academy for International Studies, an IB Diploma Programme, and the Utica Center for Science and Industry. Additionally, Bob was the initial project director of a Department of Defense grant to establish a Chinese immersion program for UCS students starting in kindergarten. Thanks to Bob's vision, dedication and tireless advocacy, the Utica Schools remain on the cutting edge of cultural exchange and language programs in the State of Michigan. This "renaissance man" of education will truly be missed by his many colleagues and admirers in UCS and beyond.

Throughout his rich and varied career, Bob has helped shape the development and lives of thousands of young people whose own careers have taken them across the globe. At his retirement party tomorrow evening, many of his former students and debaters will gather from around the country to express their appreciation for his inimitable guidance and friendship.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me as I salute Robert Van Camp, a shining example of the most dedicated of teachers, mentors and visionaries for education in Michigan, and indeed, around the globe. Although Bob will undoubtedly enjoy his retirement with Donna and their menagerie of animals on Stonecroft Farm, I hope in the next chapter of his life, he continues his work of building bridges to other cultures and countries and enriching the lives of young people everywhere.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

**HON. RON KIND**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 14, 2011*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2112) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. KIND. Madam Chair, I rise today in strong opposition to the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012. This bill cuts the Woman, Infant, and Children (WIC) Program by more than \$650 million. With the country in the midst of a fragile recovery, my Republican colleagues have decided to prevent up to 350,000 women and children from receiving benefits from this highly successful program. In Wisconsin alone, up to 4,800 women and children would not be able to enroll. For years, WIC has provided mothers and children with healthy foods, counseling on breast feeding, nutrition guidance, and health care referrals. At a time of economic uncertainty, particularly for lower and middle income individuals, these cuts don't make sense. These cuts are especially alarming because they break a 15 year commitment by members of both parties to allow anyone that qualifies to receive WIC benefits.

Not only would the majority cut funding for WIC, they would also seek to underfund programs tailored to provide American children with nutrition education and more nutritious school lunches. Currently, one in three American children is considered overweight or obese. The number of children who are considered severely obese has more than tripled over a 25 year period. Providing America's children with healthy alternatives like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and school lunches is a small price to pay to help alleviate this epidemic. In fact, it will provide more long term deficit reduction and put us on a better fiscal path than anything the majority has proposed. The long term medical, financial, and societal costs posed by childhood obesity are a far greater threat to our fiscal stability than healthy foods in schools.

Instead of putting deficit reduction on the backs of the country's most vulnerable citizens, I believe we should target true waste and fraud. For this appropriations bill, the country's outdated agriculture subsidy program is a good place to start.

DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT OF 2011

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 16, 2011*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Democracy Restoration Act of

2011. This legislation will serve to clarify and expand voting rights, as well as assist former felons with their reintegration into our democracy.

The Sentencing Project reports that, since 1997, 19 states have amended felony disenfranchisement policies in an effort to reduce their restrictiveness and expand voter eligibility. These reforms have resulted in more than 760,000 citizens regaining their voting rights. Yet, despite these reforms, an estimated 5 million people continue to be ineligible to vote in Federal elections, including nearly 4 million who reside in the 35 states that still prohibit some combination of persons on probation, parole, and/or people who have completed their sentence from voting.

I believe that there are three grave discrepancies in State laws regarding felony convictions that lead to unfairness in Federal elections. First, there is no uniform standard for voting in Federal elections, which leads to an egregious disparity and unequal participation in Federal elections based solely on where a person lives. Second, laws governing the restoration of voting rights after a felony conviction are unequal throughout the country and persons in some States can easily regain their voting rights while in other States persons effectively lose their right to vote permanently. Third, State disenfranchisement laws disproportionately impact ethnic minorities, thus adversely infringing upon citizens of these communities constitutional right to vote.

These concerns about ex-offender disenfranchisement are not rhetorical. In the past two election cycles, flawed voter purges have deprived thousands of legitimate voters of their rights. For example, an erroneous interpretation of state law by the Ohio Secretary of State deprived thousands of ex-felons in that state of even the right to register. Only Federal law can conclusively resolve the ambiguities in this area plaguing our voting system.

Like the States, Congress has recognized the need to address the barriers to full citizenship faced by ex-offenders. This voting legislation is the next step in restoring the ex-felon community to full citizenship. Denying voting rights to ex-offenders robs them of the opportunity to fully participate and contribute to their society. Disenfranchisement laws isolate and alienate ex-offenders, and have been shown to serve as one more obstacle in their attempt to successfully reintegrate into society. Moreover, these obstacles adversely impact the voting participation of their families, further undermining the effectiveness of our voting system.

This legislation is a narrowly crafted effort to expand voting rights for ex-felons, while protecting State prerogatives to generally establish voting qualifications. This legislation would only apply to persons who have been released from prison, and it would only apply to federal elections. Consequently, the bill is fully consistent with constitutional requirements established by the Supreme Court in a series of decisions upholding Federal voting rights laws.

In past Congresses, voting restoration legislation has been supported by a broad coalition of groups interested in voting and civil rights, including the NAACP, ACLU, the National Council of Churches (National and Washington Office), the National Urban League, the Human Rights Watch and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, among many others.

The practice of many states denying voting rights to former felons represents a vestige